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ABSTRACT

This booklet is concerned with the Interstate Agreement on Qualification of Educational Personnel, under which school professionals educated or experienced in one state could have their qualifications recognized in many other states without any red tape or delay. Contracts among state education authorities would provide enough similarity in methods of passing on teaching preparatory programs, other programs for the education and training of school professionals, experience qualifications, and any other elements of eligibility for certification, to justify the acceptance of a candidate for certification, or a certified teacher from another state, without an elaborate rechecking process. Some of the problems faced at present by teachers and allied school professionals are examined briefly together with the difficulties experienced in obtaining information on state certification requirements. The Interstate Agreement on the Qualification of Educational Personnel and a Model Enabling Act for it are included in the booklet. (MBM)

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INTERSTATE
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TAKING YOUR TALENTS ACROSS STATE LINES

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THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
DIVISION OF TEACHER EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION

ALBANY, NEW YORK 12224

THE INTERSTATE AGREEMENT

ON

QUALIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL

benefitting:

TEACHERS
SPECIALISTS
GUIDANCE COUNSELORS
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS
OTHER SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS
STATE AND LOCAL BOARDS
DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION

TAKING YOUR CERTIFICATION AS WELL AS YOUR TALENT ACROSS STATE LINES

Now that you have a B.A., M.A. and five years of classroom experience, where can you teach? Of course, you can stay where you are, but what would happen if circumstances compelled you to move? This question may not have occurred to you yet, but the social worker and the speech therapist who serve your schools are thinking about it right now. Next year they would like to continue their education, and they want to know whether they can work at their professions in another state while pursuing studies. The school psychologist in the next town is also asking the question because the doctor says his little boy suffers from an allergy that would be much easier to control in another climate.

Your turn to wonder whether you can be employed by a school system in another state may come next year, if your husband is transferred. Under reorganization plans now being implemented by his firm, reassignment could be to any one of three different states. Will you be able to get a certificate in the next location? The answer to this bread-and-butter question may be suggested in an impressionistic way by something a state director of teacher certification wrote recently:

> The attractive young matron at my desk was a picture of polite frustration. "But what I don't understand," she murmured wearily, "is why, with seven years of successful experience in three good school systems in two other states, I still must take a course in U.S. History and one in what you call 'foundations of education' before I can be certified here to teach high school mathematics. Doesn't my master's in mathematics mean anything?" As I muttered something about "Having to treat everyone alike" and the immutability of "established regulations having the force of law," I somehow felt my efforts to exhibit sympathy were falling just a bit short. Happily, because she was an intelligent woman who loved teaching, she did in fact take the two "necessary" courses. She is now one of our better teachers — in spite of our regulations.
>
> What purpose did those courses serve? Did they make her a better mathematics teacher? Perhaps, but one doubts it. Did this "adhering to standards" prove that my state has better teachers than States Y or Z? Hardly . . .

Whether you will submit to the toils of the certification process as patiently and perseveringly as the young matron is a question to be answered in the light of your individual temperaments and economic needs. At the very least you may wonder why you should pay the tuition money for additional courses of doubtful utility; why you should have to be satisfied with a provisional appointment rather than a regular one; or why you should be forced to forego a semester or a

year of teaching in order to straighten out arbitrary qualifications, at the very time when your new community has an unhealthy number of vacancies in the very field where you have both experience and education.

Allied School Professionals

If you belong to one of the growing list of school professions other than classroom teacher, out-of-state certification difficulties are almost certain to multiply. This is just the reverse of what the ordinary candidate would suspect. After all, isn't advising adolescents on their college and career prospects pretty much the same in Detroit and St. Louis? If a psychologist is fit to cope with the emotional problems of youngsters in Portland, Oregon, is he or she any less able to provide the same service in Portland, Maine? If a social worker from Atlanta wants to transfer to the New Orleans school system, are the ingredients of satisfactory professional performance changed by the difference in location? If a school librarian is properly trained to show children how to get the most out of books in Nebraska, are the mysteries of school libraries and the children who need to use them in Idaho or Wisconsin so peculiar that qualifying education and experience are less than fully transferrable?

Unfortunately, the inference to be drawn from these questions skip right past the legacies of school system development and the seeming demands of education budgets and administration. Traditionally schools have hired teachers. Aside from a few principals and superintendents, other professionals were considered irrelevant or too expensive. So the classroom teacher was expected to take on all the auxiliary chores – all the way from collecting the milk money to solving Junior's emotional problems and helping his parents understand what they should do to provide a home atmosphere conducive to the development and flexing of a sound mind in a healthy body.

As a result, the specialized school professional is still administratively a teacher in most places. He or she must be certified as a teacher. Only then do the authorities turn their attention to the special qualifications necessary for therapists, guidance counselors, nurses, etc.

Nor is the idea that every professional in a school should be qualified to teach as indefensible as it may appear. Especially in many of the smaller school systems, the services of specialized personnel are not usable on a full-time basis. The reading clinician or the librarian would be free to do her needlepoint for large parts of the day, if she did not also teach a few classes in English or Social Studies, or whatever else happens to have an uncovered class for which the school board has not found enough instructional funds.

So now the problem for the school social workers, speech correction experts, guidance professionals, and all the other special service personnel who want or need to move to another state is to find out whether they are qualified in the places to which they may go. Incidentally, this is not alone an employee problem. The recruiters, principals and superintendents who interview candidates for next year's positions also would like to know whether there is any point in offering a job to Mr. Jones from over the state line and whether, even after a tentative agreement is reached, he may not become sufficiently discouraged by the red tape, and worse, standing between him and the new appointment.

Certification Information

How then does one find out what the certification requirements of a state are? Precise information is not easily available for classroom teachers; for the special professional categories, even the most general information is almost impossible to obtain, except by writing to the certifying agency in each of the states about which one is concerned. If you do this, however, expect a long delay in the reply. Mountains of this kind of correspondence adorn the desks and filing cabinets of every state department of education. Budgets do not often afford enough clerks to answer the mail promptly. Even worse, if the answer to an inquiry requires any professional judgment as to the equivalency or possible waiver of requirements, the number of people available to respond is even more limited, and all of them are bound to be busy with other duties. Of course, the prospective employer school system may itself have the information, but the chances of this happy solution are good only if they have recently hired someone with a record just like the applicant's, and if the certification was successfully negotiated.

The Interstate Agreement Can Help

No state can overcome these difficulties by itself. Of course, any state legislature could enact a law welcoming the qualified and unqualified alike, and any school system could then employ professionals without seeking to apply any standards of preparation and competence. But even those who are rightly concerned over the cost of good quality education want the children of their communities to be served by professionals who know their business. Assuming relatively free interstate recognition to be desirable, school professionals in a state which accepts teachers certified in any other state would like to have the assurance that the state to which they are likely to move will be as generous as their own. With respect to teachers and other school professionals who have been educated outside the state or who have gained some or all of their experience elsewhere, a state has only two

choices: it may follow the present course of attempting to determine for itself every detail related to the qualifications of those who apply for certification and eligibility to be employed in its schools, or it must enter a cooperative system with other states so that a determination of qualification made by a sister state need not be re-examined each time a new applicant presents himself for a job as a teacher, guidance counselor, school administrator, school psychologist, or the like. The Interstate Agreement on Qualification of Educational Personnel now being considered by state legislatures provides for just such a cooperative system. Moreover, it is the only one now in existence which is likely to produce really durable results.

From time to time there have been other arrangements for the interstate recognition of teacher qualifications, and some of them are still considered to be in partial operation. However, none of them can be said to have solved the problem, or even substantially ameliorated it on a temporary basis. The trouble has been that all of these previous attempts have been only at the administrative level among officials of state education agencies. Their actions could not ignore limitations on interstate recognition that were expressed in statutes. At least equally serious, these arrangements could not themselves have the effect of law. In some cases they have been only "gentlemen's understandings" as to how incumbent certification officers would use such discretion as they might have. After several months or years when time had brought a change in the personnel at the certification desks, the agreed upon cooperation often disappeared. In fact, the new people sometimes do not even know that arrangements have been made, and just as often they are strangers to the premises and rationale which their predecessors had in mind.

During the first nine months of 1968, the first four states (Maryland, Massachusetts, New York and California) enacted the "Interstate Agreement on Qualification of Educational Personnel." If more states, as seems likely, follow suit at their next legislative sessions, we will be well on our way to a simple and workable system under which school professionals educated or experienced in one state can have their qualifications recognized in many other states, WITHOUT ANY RED TAPE OR DELAY. This would be achieved under the terms of contracts among the state education authorities which the Interstate Agreement would authorize. The contracts would provide enough similarity in methods of passing on teacher preparatory programs, other programs for the education and training of school professionals, experience qualifications, and any other elements of eligibility for certification, so that a state would be justified in accepting a candidate for certification, or a certified teacher from another state, without an elaborate rechecking process.

Another advantage of the Interstate Agreement is that, once a school professional has been certified by a contract under it, there need be no anxiety about losing the certification because a subsequent administrator decided to renege on his understanding with the other state. All certificates secured under the plan would be protected by law.

What Are the Prospects?

Almost everything written here is in the nature of a prediction. Four state enactments of the Interstate Agreement on Qualification of Educational Personnel during 1968 is a very good record, under the circumstances. The legislation was ready only late in December, 1967. This meant that such consideration of it as occurred in the few legislatures that met in 1968, an off year, was without real advance notice to those bodies. 1969, an odd-numbered year when most states have legislative sessions, is the first significant test. To be of substantial help to school professionals, the Interstate Agreement must be favorably considered by legislatures in a goodly number of states. In fact, it will do you no good at all, unless it is passed in your state. Consequently, the fate of the plan is in the hands of those of you who are interested in better educational administration and in the difference it can make in the working lives of all professionally trained individuals who teach or provide other services in the schools.

Teachers and other school professionals, as individuals and as members of professional groups, will want to follow closely the action of their own states with regard to the needless barriers to mobility.

The Interstate Agreement on the Qualification of Educational Personnel and a Model Enabling Act for it are reprinted on the following pages.

INTERSTATE AGREEMENT ON QUALIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL

Article I

Purpose, Findings, and Policy

1. The States party to this Agreement, desiring by common action to improve their respective school systems by utilizing the teacher or other professional educational person wherever educated, declare that it is the policy of each of them, on the basis of cooperation with one another, to take advantage of the preparation and experience of such persons wherever gained, thereby serving the best interests of society, of education, and of the teaching profession. It is the purpose of this Agreement to provide for the development and execution of such programs of cooperation as will facilitate the movement of teachers and other professional educational personnel among the States party to it, and to authorize specific interstate educational personnel contracts to achieve that end.

2. The party States find that included in the large movement of population among all sections of the nation are many qualified educational personnel who move for family and other personal reasons but who are hindered in using their professional skill and experience in their new locations. Variations from State to State in requirements for qualifying educational personnel discourage such personnel from taking the steps necessary to qualify in other States. As a consequence, a significant number of professionally prepared and experienced educators is lost to our school systems. Facilitating the employment of qualified educational personnel, without reference to their States of origin, can increase the available educational resources. Participation in this Compact can increase the availability of educational manpower.

Article II

Definitions

As used in this Agreement and contracts made pursuant to it, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

1. "Educational personnel" means persons who must meet requirements pursuant to State law as a condition of employment in educational programs.

2. "Designated State official" means the education official of a State selected by that State to negotiate and enter into, on behalf of his State, contracts pursuant to this Agreement.

3. "Accept", or any variant thereof, means to recognize and give effect to one or more determinations of another State relating to the qualifications of educational personnel in lieu of making or requiring a like determination that would otherwise be required by or pursuant to the laws of a receiving State.

4. "State" means a State, territory, or possession of the United States; the District of Columbia; or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

5. "Originating State" means a State (and the subdivision thereof, if any) whose determination that certain educational personnel are qualified to be employed for specific duties in schools is acceptable in accordance with the terms of a contract made pursuant to Article III.

6. "Receiving State" means a State (and the subdivisions thereof) which accept educational personnel in accordance with the terms of a contract made pursuant to Article III.

Article III

Interstate Educational Personnel Contracts

1. The designated State official of a party State may make one or more contracts on behalf of his State with one or more other party States providing for the acceptance of educational personnel. Any such contract for the period of its duration shall be applicable to and binding on the States whose designated state officials enter into it, and the subdivisions of those States, with the same force and effect as if incorporated in this Agreement. A designated state official may enter into a contract pursuant to this Article only with States in which he finds that there are programs of education, certification standards or other acceptable qualifications that assure preparation or qualification of educational personnel on a basis sufficiently comparable, even though not identical to that prevailing in his own State.

2. Any such contract shall provide for:

(a) Its duration.

(b) The criteria to be applied by an originating State in qualifying educational personnel for acceptance by a receiving State.

(c) Such waivers, substitutions, and conditional acceptances as shall aid the practical effectuation of the contract without sacrifice of basic educational standards.

(d) Any other necessary matters.

3. No contract made pursuant to this Agreement shall be for a term longer than five years but any such contract may be renewed for like or lesser periods.

4. Any contract dealing with acceptance of educational personnel on the basis of their having completed an educational program shall specify the earliest date or dates on which originating state approval of the program or programs involved can have occurred. No contract made pursuant to this Agreement shall require acceptance by a receiving State of any persons qualified because of successful completion of a program prior to January 1, 1954.

5. The certification or other acceptance of a person who has been accepted pursuant to the terms of a contract shall not be revoked or otherwise impaired because the contract has expired or been terminated. However, any certificate or other qualifying document may be revoked or suspended on any ground which would be sufficient for revocation or suspension of a certificate or other qualifying document initially granted or approved in the receiving State.

6. A contract committee composed of the designated state officials of the contracting States or their representatives shall keep the contract under continuous review, study means of improving its administration, and report no less frequently than once a year to the heads of the appropriate education agencies of the contracting States.

Article IV

Approved and Accepted Programs

1. Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to repeal or otherwise modify any law or reglation of a party State relating to the approval of programs of educational preparation having effect solely on the qualification of educational personnel within that State.

2. To the extent that contracts made pursuant to this Agreement deal with the educational requirements for the proper qualification of educational personnel, acceptance of a program of educational preparation shall be in accordance with such procedures and requirements as may be provided in the applicable contract.

Article V

Interstate Cooperation

The party States agree that:

1. They will, so far as practicable, prefer the making of multi-lateral contracts pursuant to Article III of this Agreement.

2. They will facilitate and strengthen cooperation in interstate certification and other elements of educational personnel qualification and for this purpose shall cooperate with agencies, organizations, and associations interested in certification and other elements of educational personnel qualification.

Article VI

Agreement Evaluation

The designated state officials of any party States may meet from time to time as a group to evaluate progress under the Agreement, and to formulate recommendations for changes.

Article VII

Other Arrangements

Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to prevent or inhibit other arrangements or practices of any party State or States to facilitate the interchange of educational personnel.

Article VIII

Effect and Withdrawal

1. This Agreement shall become effective when enacted into law by two States. Thereafter it shall become effective as to any State upon its enactment of this Agreement.

2. Any party State may withdraw from this Agreement by enacting a statute repealing the same, but no such withdrawal shall take effect until one year after the Governor of the withdrawing State has given notice in writing of the withdrawal to the Governors of all other party States.

3. No withdrawal shall relieve the withdrawing State of any obligation imposed upon it by a contract to which it is a party. The duration of contracts and the methods and conditions of withdrawal therefrom shall be those specified in their terms.

Article IX

Construction and Severability

This Agreement shall be liberally construed so as to effectuate the purposes thereof. The provisions of this Agreement shall be severable and if any phrase, clause, sentence, or provision of this Agreement is declared to be contrary to the constitution of any State or of the United States, or the application thereof to any Government, agency, person, or circumstance is held invalid, the validity of the remainder of this Agreement and the applicability thereof to any Government, agency, person, or circumstance shall not be affected thereby. If this Agreement shall be held contrary to the constitution of any State participating therein, the Agreement shall remain in full force and effect as to the State affected as to all severable matters.

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